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# BUILDING A BETTER WORLD THROUGH TOURISM

BY

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## INTRODUCTION

A brief news item in early February of this year announced the marriage of Susan Eisenhower, grand-daughter of former U.S. President Dwight D. Eisenhower and Roald Sagdeyev, advisor to Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev.

This relatively unnoticed event is symbolic of the unprecedented political change of the past few months. Eisenhower was President of the U.S. during the height of the Cold War. Now, some forty years later, the walls of communism are crumbling and western nations have adopted a policy aimed at encouraging the integration of the Soviet Union into the world economy in contrast to the forty year policy of containment.

Clearly, we are living at a historic time. A time when events now occurring will give shape and direction to the decade and century ahead. A time when the philosophers of leisure might come again to examine the ageless question of what is the ultimate purpose in life? Why am I here? What is really worthwhile? Not so much within a concept of leisure as time free of work; but within an Aristotelian-based philosophy of leisure as the freedom to do what is really worth doing.

Within this more integrated concept of leisure, what one chooses to do with his/her "work life", also becomes a choice and a choice which may well become available to greater numbers of people.

In a real sense, the trend of global events will broaden the choices available to governments, institutions and corporations as well. Reductions in expenditures for the military, which now exceed U.S. \$1 trillion, will open new vistas for constructive and collaborative enterprise which can "choose" for example to address major issues on the global agenda such as restoration of the environment and Third World development.

The momentous events of the past few months are occurring as we approach the 500th anniversary of the discovery of North America by Christopher Columbus, and as our friends in Iceland like to remind us, the 1000th anniversary of Leif Eriksson's landing on the Newfoundland shores of North America.

These anniversaries provide appropriate milestones in the path of the human journey to assess the successes and failures of the past 500 years and to take a "crow's nest position" in determining the direction of the next segment of our journey.

### Towards a Positive Vision of Peace

Perhaps the most powerful and symbolic photographs ever taken were the photographs of planet earth as the first U.S. astronauts began their probe into space. Edgar Mitchell described what he saw from space as a "beautiful, harmonious, peaceful looking planet, blue with white clouds, and one that gave you a deep sense of ... home, of being, of identity."

For the first time in history, we embark on a segment of the human journey with a global perspective--an awareness of the inter-connectedness of all people and all life on earth. We recognize for the first time that there are no "foreign countries" or "foreign people"; rather we are all neighbours living interdependently as members of a "Global Family" in Marshall McLuhan's "Global Village."

We recognize as well that the same life support systems of air, land, and water sustain us all.

Historians may well conclude that this vision of planet earth will have as great an impact on the future direction of human thinking as the Copernican Revolution of the 16th Century which revealed that the earth was not the centre of the universe.

The months and years ahead offer several opportunities and challenges. One of these challenges is conceptual in nature--it is to move from the historic notion of peace as the "absence of war" to a positive concept of peace.

From space, we view the world as one living organism where the health of the total organism is necessary for the health of each component part, and the health of each component part, in turn, contributes to the health of the total organism.

With such a perspective of an organic and interconnected world, we can begin to think in terms of a positive vision of peace. In this context, the Russian word for peace and its various meanings are illuminating. The word is "mir" which means:

- the universe
- planet earth
- the human race
- peace and tranquility
- concord in relations between people and states
- freedom from war

The Russian definition of peace is both multi-dimensional and positive. It implies peace and tranquility within ourselves; peace with

our fellow humans and between nations; peace with nature and our spaceship earth; peace within the universe (and perhaps we can add--peace with our Creator).

Once we have created that vision, we have already set the forces in motion to bring about the actualization of that vision. We must be armed with new insights rather than new weapons. Insights which harness the resources of nature and the intelligence of humans for the common good of all. New visions will be required from fields other than politics--from fields such as anthropology, psychology, sociology and geography; from the scientific community with visions for the constructive use of science and technology; from the environmental and ecological sciences with visions of ecological harmony; from the cultural community and the full range of creative art forms for a spirit of celebration in cultural diversity; from the fields of sport, recreation, education and health with a view towards self-fulfillment and the pursuit of excellence; and from the business community for a vision of the benefits from international trade and the free flow of goods, people and ideas.

Most importantly, we must as individuals and ordinary people work towards and contribute to a positive vision of our common destiny, new visions of how to relate and ways of relating. President Dwight D. Eisenhower said some forty years ago, "I'd like to believe that people in the long run are going to do more to promote peace than are governments. Indeed, I think that people want peace so much that one of these days, governments had better get out of their way and let them have it".

### Globally Responsible Enterprise

A parallel challenge at this juncture in world history is a redeployment of the massive human, scientific and capital resources currently engaged in military enterprise, or the economic enterprise of destruction--to constructive economic enterprise; from national security based on the principles of "Mutually Assured Destruction"--to global security based on the principles of "Mutually Assured Development."

In the words of Buckminster Fuller, a shift from "weaponry to livingry" clearly would provide the resources needed to meet the full range of human needs. It would also provide the resources necessary to gradually bring about a balanced restoration of the world's major ecosystems and the prospect of global security within the context of sustainable development.

The "window of opportunity" in current world events comes as we approach the start of a new century--a new millenium. The decade of the 1990's offers an opportunity for visionary thinking--creative visionary thinking which will in turn determine the manner in which we relate to one another as a global family; with our environment; and the constructive manner in which we engage our human, natural, and capital resources to create a better world for all in the 21st Century.

This "window of opportunity" also comes at a time when we are

witnessing the globalization and concentration of business enterprise. As corporations grow in scale and scope, the manner in which they define their missions; their philosophical base and policies; their concept of stakeholders; and the manner in which they conduct their operations; all will be increasingly instrumental in shaping the quality of life and quality of the environment in the world of the 21st Century.

### The Global Significance of Tourism

Tourism is now the world's largest industry with revenues (including both domestic and international travel) approaching US\$ 2.5 trillion, (an amount two times greater than world military expenditures). Tourism is the world's second largest export industry after oil and represents 25 percent of international trade in service. Domestic and international travel combined account for 10-12 percent of the gross world product.

Moreover, tourism is a human resource intensive industry employing a full range of executives, managerial, technical and semi-skilled human resources. More than 100 million persons are employed by the world tourism industry either directly or indirectly.

Prospects for the continued growth of world tourism appear to be more promising. Societal trends are favourable to the continued growth of demand and low-cost air travel is becoming increasingly available. As well, the governments of the world are playing a stronger role in encouraging the growth of both domestic and international tourism as a means of job creation, economic diversification, and a source of foreign exchange.

Beyond its economic significance, there is a growing realization of the role of international travel in promoting understanding and trust among people of different cultures. This is not only a pre-condition for additional trade in goods and services, particularly with newly emerging trading partners, but also a foundation on which to build improved relationships among nations towards the goal of world peace and prosperity.

### Tourism--The World's Peace Industry

As we travel and communicate in ever-increasing numbers, we are discovering that most people, regardless of their political or religious orientation, race, or socio-economic status, want a world in which all are fed, sheltered, productive, and fulfilled.

The story is told about a Senator approaching Abraham Lincoln amidst the passions of the Civil War and saying, "Mr. President, I believe that enemies should be destroyed". Lincoln replied, "I agree with you sir, and the best way to destroy an enemy is to make him a friend".

Through travel, people are finding friends in every corner of the earth; finding common bonds with the rest of humanity and spreading

messages of hope for a peaceful world.

Tourism properly designed and developed, has the potential to help bridge the psychological and cultural distances that separate people of diverse races, colours, religions and stages of social and economic development. Through tourism we can come rather to an appreciation of the rich human, cultural and ecological diversity that our world mosaic offers; to evolve a mutual trust and respect for one another and the dignity of all life on earth.

The 8,000 international conferences held each year increasingly draw on people of all nations to share their concerns; propose solutions to problems; exchange ideas; and create "opportunity networks". The growth in student exchanges, cultural exchanges, twinning of cities, and international sporting events not only give us an appreciation of our differences, but also show us the commonality of our goals and aspirations as a human family. The collective outcomes of these travel and tourism experiences help humankind to appreciate the full meaning of the "Global Village" and the bonds that people everywhere have with one another.

There will be approximately 400 million person trips to foreign countries in 1990. This number is growing by 5-7 percent each year. Millions more will act as "hosts" to these travellers as part of their daily job and/or as interested residents of the host country.

These millions of daily person-to-person encounters are potentially a powerful force for improved relations among the people and nations of the world; relations which emphasize a sharing and appreciation of cultures rather than the lack of trust bred by isolation.

### Globally Responsible Travel

Former U.S. President Jimmy Carter, and his wife Rosalynn both travelled extensively following their years in the White House. Travel was undertaken to discover new world issues and social needs and to be involved in "curing the ills that travel revealed".

In a recently published book, Everything to Gain: Making the Most of the Rest of Your Life, the former President states that "the vacation challenge lies in figuring out how to combine further education with the pleasures of travelling in distant places, and on occasion, helping to make the lives of people you visit a little better".

The Carters have been involved in a number of programs which provide such an experience. Habitats For Humanity arranges for volunteers to spend their vacations building houses for low income people in more than 200 locations in North America and Third World countries. They have also been involved with various adult exchange programs, the International Executive Service Corps and GATE (Global Awareness Through Experience) which organizes tours designed to experience the realities of Third World

life.

These are but a few of the many new forms of travel that have evolved over the past several years. These and similar travel programs are currently one of the most accelerated growth segments of the travel industry and will continue to be in the 1990's as people become globally aware and oriented.

What might be called "Globally Responsible Travel" has evolved in several forms including: people to people travel, education and study travel, work camp travel, and special interest travel, to name a few.

Earthwatch is a noteworthy example of an organization whose members use their vacations to assist in research projects around the world. Since its inception in 1971, Earthwatch has mobilized 67 projects in 79 countries providing researchers with 20,000 volunteers and more than \$12 million in funds and equipment. Volunteers pay anywhere from \$1,000 and up, not to travel from place to place, but to base themselves at a research site to assist in collecting data and making observations.

Also noteworthy are work camp vacations which offer a mini version of a "Peace Corps" type experience. Funded by more than 100 U.N. affiliated organizations, individuals and groups are able to spend their two or three week vacations at one of 8000 socially significant projects in 36 countries. Participants pay their own air fare (room and board is free) to build low-costing housing, maintain parks, hiking trails and game reserves, or work with disadvantaged children.

A particularly interesting form of tourism which gradually emerged in the 1980's is "Ecotourism". Ecotourism is a form of culturally and environmentally sensitive travel which fosters an environmental ethic among travellers and also contributes to the conservation and management of natural areas for long term, sustainable economic development.

Ecotourism is increasingly being seen as a model of non-consumptive economic development, emphasizing the long term protection of biological resources and ecological processes. Costa Rica, for example, welcomes nature enthusiasts with the slogan "Costa Rica--It's Only Natural". With tourism now the number three earner of foreign exchange for Costa Rica, government officials and private industry have been motivated to protect their rain forests.

A noteworthy tour company in this regard is Journeys International dedicated to the philosophy and principles of Ecotourism. Journeys recruits clients who are sympathetic to preserving natural environments and traditional cultures. Working within the concept of an "extended global family", Journeys invites and facilitates participation in a kinship that extends beyond the temporal bonds of a trip. Since its founding 10 years ago the company has placed high priority on helping local communities to protect their natural and cultural heritage.

Through the nonprofit Earth Preservation Fund, the Journey's staff and travellers have volunteered time and resources in small-scale local projects. These have included forest restoration projects in Nepal and Costa Rica; wildlife conservation in Africa; monastery restoration

projects in the Himalayas; restoration of Peru's Inca Trail; and a variety of conservation-education projects and solar-energy projects. Their "Human Warmth Project" provides warm winter clothing to people in villages of Nepal, Tibet, Ladakh, and Peru.

Ecotourism is particularly advantageous to developing countries. It attracts persons who are tolerant--even interested in experiencing--small scale, locally operated accommodations, built by local people with local materials. Ecotourism emphasizes the employment of local people as managers, interpreters and custodians of protected areas because of their experience and knowledge accumulated and handed down over centuries.

Ecotourism also directs economic activity to rural communities thereby spreading the economic benefits into the interior of a country.

### Tourism as a Model of Globally Responsible Enterprise

The tourism industry, perhaps more than any other, is well positioned to be a 21st Century model of globally responsible enterprise.

The tourism industry, combined with other world park systems, can make a contribution to living in harmony with our environment. Tourism makes possible the setting aside and preservation of vast tracts of land as national parks and wilderness areas. More than 3,000 protected areas in 120 countries and covering more than 4 million square miles are now preserved in their natural state. Visitors to these areas experience the beauty and majesty of the world's finest natural features and come away with a heightened appreciation of environmental values. In national parks townsites such as Banff and Jasper, we have the opportunity for "Man" to be co-creators with nature, bringing the best of human design in juxtaposition with the best of nature.

Nearly half of these areas are in tropical countries, and are focal points for international tourism, particularly in East and South Africa, Costa Rica, Ecuador, India, Nepal and Indonesia. These preserved natural areas can make a contribution to cultural preservation as well. Carefully designed interpretive programs can make the park a focus for fostering local knowledge, skills and lifestyles to perpetuate traditional values among indigenous people and to educate visitors about their culture.

Transfrontier parks, or border parks, provide a special category of national parks. These are protected areas located along the boundaries of countries and are increasingly recognized as "International Peace Parks". Border parks, on each side of a frontier, offer the benefits of larger, contiguous protected areas, increased cooperation between nations, and improved international understanding.

Poland and Czechoslovakia pioneered the concept of international cooperation in establishing border parks. The Krakow Protocol, signed in 1925, resulted in three joint park areas being set up between 1948 and 1967.



The first International Peace Park, called the Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park, was dedicated in 1932, symbolically uniting Glacier National Park in Montana with Waterton Lakes National Park in Alberta, Canada. The park's stated purpose is to permanently commemorate the long-existing relationship of peace and goodwill between the United States and Canada. Forty-four transborder parks now exist, and others are being dedicated.

Tourism contributes to both the preservation and development of the world's cultural heritage. It provides governments with the economic rationale for the preservation of historical sites and monuments and the motivation for indigenous groups to preserve unique dimensions of heritage in the form of dance, music and artifacts.

Tourism provides both the audience and the economic engine for museums, the performing and visual arts and the restoration of historical areas. Tourism has also been a major factor in the re-birth of urban centres.

By providing new opportunities and creating new jobs, travel and tourism serve as a catalyst for positive change. Through public/private partnerships and other initiatives, many decaying cities around the world are being transformed from areas of urban blight to places of culture and beauty. Warehouses become boutiques, restaurants and hotels; old hospitals and factories are transformed into museums; communities that formerly were shunned create needed jobs for area workers and infuse additional dollars into their economies.

J. Willard Marriott  
First Global Conference,  
Tourism - A Vital Force  
For Peace

Tourism ranks among the top three industries in each of 46 states. It is the main industry of many cities including, for example, San Francisco. A survey in 1987 showed that 46 percent of the residents of San Francisco felt that all or part of their income resulted directly or indirectly from the travel and tourism industry.

Partners For Liveable Places is a Washington-based coalition dedicated to improving urban design and amenities for the enjoyment of residents as well as tourists. Its flagship program, "The Economics of Amenity", focuses on demonstrating the social and economic benefits that result from cultural facilities, urban parks and open spaces, natural and scenic facilities, urban parks and open spaces, natural and scenic resources, well-designed buildings, restored historic areas, museums, and healthy civic institutions. Partners has helped hundreds of communities identify, develop, and promote their own unique amenity profile, thereby improving quality of life for residents, enhancing retail activity, attracting business investments, and stimulating a convention and tourism industry.

It is interesting to note in this context that Maclean's magazine reported in its November issue that the centerpiece of cooperative business ventures currently being discussed between Canada and the Soviet Union is a "\$1 billion project that could transform Leningrad into a gleaming tourist showcase."

Tourism also contributes to Third World Development. Pope Paul VI once said that "development is the new name for peace". The tourism industry is a human resource-intensive industry. It has the capacity to generate foreign exchange and a high ratio of government revenues as a proportion of total expenditures. As well, it has a capacity for both forward and backward linkages with other sectors of the economy. Property designed, it can contribute to social and cultural enrichment as well as economic development. For these reasons, it is increasingly attractive as an industry among developing nations. Tourism earned developing countries \$55 billion in foreign currency in 1988, second only to oil revenues.

In the Caribbean, for example, tourism is the major industry of each of the more than 30 states in the region. The tourism industry contributes further to the economy of each state through its linkages to other economic sectors such as fishing, agriculture, and manufacturing. Tourism has, in fact, been the only industry in the Caribbean that has shown steady growth over the past 15 years.

What is also most interesting is that the tourism industry has provided some 30 diverse States of the region--States with different languages (French, English, Dutch, Spanish) and cultures--a basis of collaboration for a common purpose. They have a strong marketing network throughout North America, and now Europe and Asia as well, to promote tourism to their region. This is only possible because they have come together and have combined their marketing resources. They are also increasingly working together in dealing with tourism-related issues and meeting the challenges of an industry that continues to grow at 6-8 percent a year.

The development of tourism through collaborative North-South and public-private sector joint ventures can also help build much needed transportation networks in Third World countries thereby connecting large populations and areas to the world's economic mainstream. Combined with the development of telecommunications, technical assistance efforts would also be facilitated, thereby narrowing the North-South information gap and thereby creating a basis for increased investment and trade opportunities. Properly planned transportation and telecommunication infrastructure and economic development projects (including tourism) can also be a means of alleviating over-population, congestion and related problems of Third World megacities.

In Egypt, as well, the one Arab country at peace with Israel, tourism now accounts for 30% of trade in goods and services and is Egypt's single, most important industry.

Tourism is also bringing Egyptians in closer personal contact with their Israeli neighbours thereby helping to secure a long term peaceful relationship. In 1988, 77,000 Israelis visited Egypt as tourists.

Tourism has contributed in some destinations to the preservation and even the re-birth of local customs such as dance, festivals and crafts. In several Third World destinations, tourism allows traditional artists to survive and provides funding for the restoration of historic sites.

#### FIRST GLOBAL CONFERENCE: TOURISM--A VITAL FORCE FOR PEACE

The first major international conference, totally dedicated to discussing the concept of "Tourism as a Vital Force for Peace" was held in Vancouver, Canada in October 1988. Sponsors were Air Canada, en Route Card, the Financial Post, and the Governments of Canada, British Columbia and Alberta.

The Conference attracted 800 motivated participants from 67 countries and featured 20 keynote addresses from prominent international leaders including videotaped messages from President Reagan and Pope John Paul II. Two hundred other presenters were involved in a stimulating series of concurrent sessions and workshops.

The Conference served to broaden awareness of the potential for tourism, the world's largest industry, to contribute to:

- Greater mutual understanding, trust and goodwill among people of the world;
- An improved quality of environment, both built and natural;
- The World Conservation Strategy of "Sustainable Development".

Delegates reached consensus on a broad range of recommendations related to the environment, planning and development of tourism, "Places for Peace", exchange programs, education, and the social, cultural and economic aspects of tourism.

The International Institute for Peace Through Tourism has been established as a legacy of the Conference. The Institute, located in Montreal, will serve to orchestrate the implementation of key conference recommendations.

The most significant current initiative of the Institute is the organization of a TOURISM INDUSTRY SUMMIT MEETING to be held in Reykjavik. Iceland's President, Vidgis Finnbogadottir, who was Honorary Chairman of the Vancouver Conference, has accepted to act as President of the Summit Meeting which will bring together 80-100 senior industry executives from around the world. As well, 10-15 world leaders from related areas such as environment, culture, communications, and education will be invited to participate.

Theme of the meeting is VISION 2000. Its main focus will be to formulate concrete proposals for East-West and North-South collaboration on tourism related projects aimed at a continuation of the peace process at all levels of society.

The meeting will also serve to establish a continuing forum at the "statesmen" level for East-West and North-South dialogue and collaborative leadership in implementing action programs with the aim of contributing to a better world through tourism.

#### PLACES FOR PEACE - AN INVITATION

A central recommendation of the Vancouver Conference was that the tourism industry join with the parks and recreation community, environmental groups and peace groups as catalysts in creating "PLACES FOR PEACE" throughout the world. From the local community level (Peace Gardens, Peace Memorials, Peace Parks) to the national and international level (International Peace Parks, World Heritage Parks and sites, International Friendship trails), "Places For Peace" will serve as places of ceremony and celebration and as crossroads for both domestic and international travelers.

Municipal Peace Parks might serve as the site for Visitor Information Centers which might also serve as "Network Centers" facilitating people-to-people contact for those visitors and local residents desiring such an experience.

Some recent noteworthy examples of Places For Peace are the Toronto Peace Gardens in Nathan Phillip's Square; a Peace Park in Tashkent, a USSR sister city of Seattle, built by 200 volunteers from Seattle working with local residents; and the National Peace Garden in Washington, D.C. which received more than 2,000 entries in its design competition. The National Peace Garden has already generated interest around the world and has resulted in the building of several peace parks elsewhere in the United States.

With this article, an invitation is extended to parks and recreation leaders and executives in leisure industries, to join with representatives of the tourism industry in dedicating Places For Peace in communities across North America and overseas.

#### CONCLUSION

In the mid 1980's, Buckminster Fuller stated that humankind would be taking its final exam in the remaining years of the Twentieth Century. Events of the past year give some hope that we will pass that final exam.

The decade of the 1990's may well be a transitional decade. A decade in which relations among people in the global village and their governments are based on mutual understanding, trust, respect and love--rather than fear bred from isolation. A decade which is based on international cooperation in addressing major issues, such as the environment and sustainable development; as well as the challenges before us, such as space exploration.

The nature of such a transition in confluence with new vistas in science and technology, global communications, and new perspectives on the global inter-relatedness of all life on earth, can truly make the 1990's a decade in which we start the "BUILDING OF A NEW WORLD" as declared by the cover of TIME Magazine following the week-end of summitry in Malta and the Vatican in December 1989.

The Travel and Tourism industry is well positioned to play a lead role in such a global agenda. Through encouraging each traveller, each host, each front line person in the industry, to extend a hand in friendship as an "Ambassador For Peace;" by advocating and contributing to an improved quality of environment, both built and natural; and by future development which enhances the social values and cultural traditions of host countries, the tourism industry can become a model of globally responsible enterprise.

George Bush began his inaugural address with the following prayer:

Make us strong to do your work, willing to hear and heed your will and write on our hearts these words: use power to help people for we are given power not to advance our own purposes, nor to make a great show in the world, nor a name. There is one just use of power, and it is to serve people.

The tourism industry, as the world's largest industry, has potentially greater power to serve people and to bring about a better world than any other industry. Every traveller, every host has the capacity to be a "point of light" in President Bush's concept of a thousand points of light and his vision of a kinder, gentler society--every traveller and every host has the capacity to be an "Ambassador for Peace".

Persons wishing to learn more about the activities of the International Institute for Peace Through Tourism and/or to be on a mailing list for the Second Global Conference are invited to contact the author

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